



ANNUAL RYEGRASS

Lolium multiflorum (Iolium from an ancient Latin word for ryegrass; multiflorum means many-flowered).

Why it Was Chosen To Reseed Wildfire Burned Areas:

- Annual Ryegrass seedlings are vigorous and perform well on disturbed areas; their fibrous root system effectively stabilizes the soil.
- This grass establishes itself quickly in cool conditions.
- This seed is not expensive and always in good supply.

How Much to Use:

On wildfire burn areas, use a broadcast seeding rate of 8.0 pounds per acre. Use two pounds of seed for a 10,000 square foot area. Homeowners can buy this in most seed stores.

Other Uses in California:

Annual Ryegrass is a very palatable range and pasture grass, and is useful for wildlife habitat. It is known also as Italian Ryegrass. This species is found naturally in California below 3000 feet elevation, particularly on heavier textured soil.

Background:

Annual Ryegrass has been used for many years as an effective short-term soil stabilization plant following wildfires on fire-dependent chaparral and coastal sagebrush communities. It typically is replaced by brush re-growth in a few years. Annual Ryegrass has been an important component of the California annual grassland ecosystem since the 1800's.

There are different opinions on its usage in large watershed areas. It is a strong competitor for the nutrients available after a burn. Where it achieves a thick stand, the dry plants form a heavy mulch during the summer. This mulch can shade out new seedlings trying to emerge after the next early winter storms. These characteristics are considered by some to retard the reestablishment of the resident plant species.

Insight for Homeowners:

This annual grass will go dormant in the summer. It can be mowed to 3 to 4 inches high after maturity for fire hazard control.

What it Looks Like



A winter growing annual grass that grows up to 24 inches with upright leaves and seed heads.

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